

COLOMBIAN SPECIALTY COFFEE INDUSTRY FLOURISHES

Colombian coffee is a reason for pride and national identity, and for some years now, a commodity for millions of Americans. Today, the U.S. is the main buyer of Colombian coffee, importing over one third of the national export product. The U.S. Government is committed to strengthening this industry; supporting specialty coffees that help avoid growing illicit crops and help generate new jobs.



Specialty Coffee Program (SCP) beneficiary picks coffee in Popayán, in Southern Colombia.

Since 2004, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has invested over \$30 million in this sector, working with over 7,000 small coffee growers to enhance crop productivity and generate almost 23,000 new jobs, keeping 74,131 acres of land away from growing illicit crops. Currently, USAID supports the export of 340,000 sacks of specialty coffees (20% of exported coffee) offering better prices and benefiting 32,700 families.

Between 2004 and 2010, USAID will invest \$35 million in

technical assistance to help small coffee growers become more competitive in the global market. In this timeframe, it will help cultivate over 247,105 acres of specialty coffees by strengthening producers' associations, providing training, linking producers to international buyers and assisting farmers so they may receive international certificates. Furthermore, and for the next three years, a new project by USAID and the National Federation

of Coffee Growers of Colombia (FEDECAFE) will allow for the development of the Association of Specialty Coffees of Colombia and increase the export of this product to two million sacks.

TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

1. Assistance to farmers with three hectares (7.4 acres) or less of land: Development of better planting methods, environmental management, enhanced products, and the development of infrastructure.

2. Links to the market: Facilitating links to the international market, for example to companies such as Starbucks, Green Mountain Roasters, McDonalds, etc.; and help comply with international certificates, such as those established by Rainforest Alliance, Starbucks and Nestle.



U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William R. Brownfield and Caldas Governor Mario Aristizabal, during the signing ceremony between USAID and FEDECAFE.

U.S. AND FEDECAFE SIGN AGREEMENT

The United States and the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia (FEDECAFE) will support the cultivation of 15,000 hectares (37,065 acres), and the re-planting of 15,000 hectares (37,065 acres), of specialty coffees in 11 departments throughout Colombia. The United States, through its US Agency for International Development-USAID, provided \$4.2 million. The agreement was signed on February 12, 2008 by U.S. Ambassador to Colombia William R. Brownfield and FEDECAFE General Manager Gabriel Silva, during the inauguration of a plant of freeze-dried coffee plant in Chinchiná, Caldas.

Around 25,000 small coffee-grower families linked to Specialty Coffee Program will receive technical assistance to support the implementation of practices that will allow them to obtain several coffee certifications. Furthermore, resources will allow marginal coffee growers to gain access to loans in the framework of a program that allows for the rejuvenation of aging coffee plantations, as agreed by the Colombian Government and FEDECAFE. This initiative adds to the efforts made by the American Government to promote the competitiveness of the specialty coffees sector in Colombia.

If you're interested in publishing this story or on obtaining more information on US support to Colombia, please call: (57-1) 383-2625 or write to: AndradeLE@state.gov